

Introduction

The incumbent of this position uses a high level of knowledge and expertise in the agricultural or biological sciences employed by Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) and in PPQ's survey, regulatory, control, and eradication procedures, pre-departure, and other AQI inspection techniques. This expertise is applied to the resolution of a variety of difficult and complex control problems, as well as inspection and regulatory issues, either in specific cases or for recurrent problems. The officer performs one or more of the following major duties for a significant amount of his/her work time.

Duties

1. Serves as Compliance Officer. Prepares, negotiates, monitors, and, when necessary, amends compliance agreements with Federal/State agencies, industry, catering services, cartage firms, nurseries, and/or other regulated organizations and uses various interpersonal techniques of persuasion, often encountering and overcoming language and cultural obstacles to further compliance. Constantly monitors performance of the compliance agreements and either amends, terminates, or recommends termination of agreements as appropriate. Investigates violations and prepares investigative reports.
2. Serves as Operations (Desk) Officer requiring expertise, experience and in-depth knowledge of Agency quarantine regulations, regulatory requirements of other pertinent agencies, port operations, and labor issues. Responds to a wide range of inquiries from within the agency, other agencies, the public and industry, which regularly requires sound judgment, diplomacy, tact and expert quarantine knowledge. Researches questions dealing with unusual, unique issues and obtains, when necessary, answers/rulings from headquarters staff offices, or the National Plant Health Center. Coordinates, plans, and executes inspection assignments, including overtime, and produces and updates daily rotation schedules. The Operations Officer assists in coordinating operations at local and remote sites involving phytosanitary certification, air freight, maritime cargo, overland freight/truck cargo, passenger clearance, etc., to resolve technical and regulatory questions and approve the release of cargo. Compiles data, maintains logs, and prepares monthly/daily reports on work unit operations.
3. Serves as a Cargo Entry Specialist for the port, responsible for making or advising on a wide variety of complex determinations on the enterability of all cargo of interest to PPQ. This requires expert knowledge of plant regulations, animal by-product regulations, biological and pharmaceuticals permits, permit requirements, chemical and hazardous materials, and fumigation requirements. Using an in-depth knowledge of the entry requirements of other agencies such as

the U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the Food and Drug Administration, refers agents to those agencies when applicable. Coordinates quarantine actions with state cooperators, researchers, brokers, importers, and others on interpretation of regulatory guidelines pertaining to permit and general cargo. Keen interpersonal skills are required to deal with the extreme pressure that is often applied by importers to have their cargo released quickly. Provides expert guidance on animal export certificates and export and re-export certificates for plant products. Compiles the work accomplishment data report on a monthly basis.

4. Serves as a Backup Identifier and assists in the determination of the need for and in the delivery of training in identification of plants, plant pests, diseases, and biological control organisms.

5. Serves as Canine Coordinator for the port or geographical area which includes other canine handlers, and is responsible for overseeing canine program activities by providing technical direction to other canine officers and management. Serves as the primary liaison on canine operational activities with management, canine training center, regional and national divisions, state officials, other agencies, industry, educational institutions, and other interested individuals and entities affecting canine activities at the port. Serves as the canine work team leader, providing technical guidance to other canine teams. Assigns and reviews daily work activities, disseminates and interprets new canine activities related to technical work, conducts team meetings, and organizes assignments to provide efficient and effective coverage to all areas of the work site. Evaluates canine activities as part of overall pest exclusion program at work unit(s). Modifies program to adapt to changing risk patterns. Works with other regional and national canine coordinators to assess and refine overall program. Schedules proficiency training for the teams and ensures that training aids are available. Schedules public relations events and coordinates outreach activities with Public Awareness Officers.

6. As Information Management Officer, combines the technical expertise of a PPQ Officer with information management technology to coordinate and monitor local information management through programs such as ACS, AMS, IPM, APIS, AQI monitoring, EXCERPT, NAPIS, PIN and HOPPER. Serves as the local program expert for these activities and is the technical consultant and trainer for management, journeyman officers, other agencies, industry, brokers, and others. Works with Computer Specialists to resolve any software or hardware problems and recommends program enhancements. Uses these programs to analyze data and program activities, and prepares reports for management and other officers. Conducts risk analyses with the use of various databases and other information resources to determine inspection priorities of cargo, passengers, or carriers.

7. As Public Awareness Officer, determines the need for, plans, and carries out local public information initiatives. Recommends to management when PPQ program events warrant attention by the news media. Coordinates major activities with Legislative and Public Affairs. Contacts the media and makes appropriate arrangements for coverage of the stories, sometimes including the writing of news scripts. Plans and coordinates school and media events including classroom, radio, and TV appearances, to disseminate timely information on plant health and

quarantine issues. Prepares exhibits for and serves as the Agency's primary spokesperson during such events. Makes presentations at meetings of public service/civic organizations to deliver PPQ related information. Serves as the Agency's primary liaison official with foreign officials and dignitaries, other agencies, businesses, and business associations concerned with activities affected by Agency plant quarantine programs.

8. Serves as Contact Officer (CPO) for an assigned area, responsible for overseeing and providing technical guidance to PPQ officers and other federal, state, or county regulatory officials who have joined PPQ in a cooperative export certification program. In ensuring the continuity and quality control of the export certification program, the CPO reviews a sample of phytosanitary certificates issued by PPQ officers and cooperators for compliance with established policy and foreign import requirements, documents mistakes, and forwards discrepancies to originators. Recommends revocation of individual's certification when warranted. Serves as the liaison between the Export Certification unit (ECU) and the field, keeps pertinent records of cooperators, determines needs for and provides training, participates in workshops, and assists in establishing and monitoring Memoranda of Understanding with cooperating units.

9. Serves as an Inspection Station Specialist, responsible for carrying out the specialized function of inspecting propagated plants for quarantine diseases and pests. Conducts an intensive examination of plants, soil, and seeds using a variety of methods and determines the proper disposition of the item. Coordinates quarantine actions with the state(s) and monitors post-entry requirements. Provides expert guidance to other PPQ Officers, researchers, brokers, importers, travelers, and others on interpretative techniques and regulatory requirements pertaining to propagated plants including regulatory requirements of other agencies, CITES covered plants, specialized treatments, and other post-entry actions. May be the key contact with rescue centers for the placement of rare, threatened, and/or endangered species plant material.

10. Serves as a Treatment Coordination Officer for the port. Uses a high level of knowledge, expertise, and communications ability to oversee the treatment programs for the port, which may include fumigations, hot water treatments, pesticide applications, radiation treatments, or others. Ensures that work done by PPQ Officers, state cooperators, or contractors is technically correct and also meets applicable laws and regulations pertaining to the safety of workers and the environment. Coordinates treatment schedules with supervisors, brokers, port authorities, regulatory agencies, and others. Keeps management informed of special requirements and provides input to compliance officers on agreements with applicators. Develops local guidelines to supplement established national treatment schedules. Working with port authorities and other local authorities, consults on the design of treatment facilities and makes recommendations on the modification of facilities. Maintains safety equipment, gas detectors, and other supplies used in treatments. Collects, generates and distributes monthly reports, inputs treatment records information in computer, and updates treatment manuals. In collaboration with the training officer, monitors pesticide certification status of port employees. As a treatment expert, continually reviews and updates local port policies to ensure safe, effective treatments.

11. Serves as a Team Leader at a work site by providing technical guidance to a group of officers or officers and technicians. Assigns and reviews daily work activities, disseminates and interprets new regulations or methodology related to the technical work, makes difficult regulatory decisions and/or domestic decisions, resolves problems with cooperators and difficult passengers/customers, conducts team meetings, and organizes assignments to provide for coverage in all areas of the work site. Coordinates, plans, and executes inspection assignments, including overtime, and produces and updates daily rotation schedules. Provides advisory input to management for progress reviews and year-end evaluations. The team leader is knowledgeable of the workload at the work site, equipment needs, leave schedules, priorities of inspections or programs in order to ensure/maintain continuous efficient program activities. Serves as a key point of contact and source of technical advice at the work site for representatives of other agencies, industry, and the public.

12. Serves as work unit Training Officer. Collaborates with Agency training specialists and organizational development specialists to determine whether on-the-job or classroom training and/or other interventions are needed to improve employee performance. Analyzes the work to be done and writes training objectives/plans for work units and employees. Develops and conducts classroom training and conducts on-the-job training, which may require soliciting input from industry representatives and recognized experts outside of the agency. Evaluates the effectiveness of training and, based on the results, revises, adds, or deletes content and practice. Keeps the on-the-job training updated and relevant. Prepares job aids to guide on-the-job performance. Delivers and/or facilitates off-the-shelf or training prepared by agency training specialists. Arranges for training from PDC and other sources of training and delivery. Develops and conducts external training programs for Federal agency personnel, State and local agencies, private industry, military personnel, etc.

13. Serves as Domestic Programs Coordinator. As the primary liaison for the Agency on operational activities, works with state officials, other agencies, industry, colleges and universities, and others interested in activities affected by Agency plant quarantine programs, in a large geographical area incorporating several counties and covering complex programs. Work requires independence of action and a thorough knowledge of all PPQ programs that operate in the area. Plans, coordinates and conducts, and analyzes and evaluates all program activities within assigned area. Administers cooperative agreements and initiates and implements agreements unique to the area.

Serves as Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) on treatment programs. The officer monitors the effects of control operations and deposition on the area to be treated, target pests, sensitive sites, and other environmental components of the program. Ensures all actions of the contractor are in compliance with contract provisions. Resolves conflicts and concerns that may emerge from program operations.

Independently conducts regulatory inspections at laboratories and in the field with regard to movement under permit of soil, genetically engineered or biological organisms. Submits written

report of results to supervisor. Works with researchers and laboratory directors in these high technology fields and must relate to the scientists in terms of their concerns about the hazards involved and the intense public scrutiny of these controversial activities.

Prepares site-specific environmental assessments in accordance with national environmental laws and regulations on the use of pesticides, biological organisms, or other technologies used in control and/or eradication activities. Cooperates with staff and State and local officials in preparing environmental assessments.

14. Serves as AQI Director/Small Port. The officer plans, organizes and directs or performs the AQI work conducted in the port. This includes the direction of the work of other employees assigned to the unit. Personally inspects or directs the inspection of ships, aircraft, vehicles, baggage, railway cars, mail, plant products, and other items for restricted or prohibited agricultural commodities, animal by-products, and agricultural pests. Resolves problems of a controversial nature where guides and precedents are not available or need extensive interpretation. In these matters, serves as the final technical authority in the port.

Civil Rights

The Officer adheres to Civil Rights policies, goals, and objectives in performing the duties of the position. Assures that written and oral communications are bias-free and that differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

Factors

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position FL 1-7 1250 Points

A breadth and depth of knowledge of botany or agriculturally-related sciences, transportation patterns and practices, and farming/ranching and nursery practices sufficient to resolve unusual or recurrent technical problems.

A high level of expertise in PPQ related laws, regulations, techniques, and practices to adapt them to sensitive and difficult cases and to provide advice to other officers on technical issues.

A knowledge of systematic approaches to problem-solving in order to plan and implement training, to independently plan biotechnology inspections, to prepare environmental assessments, to lead emergency eradication teams, to lead project teams, to coordinate canine activities or to identify insects through their various life cycle states, or to function as a COR on control programs.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls

FL 2-4 450 Points

The officer, in consultation with the supervisor, identifies sensitive inspection issues or problems to address. The officer establishes goals, objectives, and deadlines for projects and/or operations to be completed.

The officer plans and executes his/her assignments, selecting appropriate techniques and methodology and determining what approach to be taken. The officer resolves technical and other conflicts and coordinates the work with others as necessary. He/she works within the guidelines of the Agency, adapts these, as appropriate, and reports progress to the supervisor. The work is reviewed with regard to results and the relationships developed with other units (e.g., cooperators).

Factor 3 - Guidelines FL 3-3 275 Points

Guides include pertinent federal and state laws and regulations, directives, manuals, treatment instructions, textbooks or other scientific reference material, precedents, and current practice and policy.

The officer uses mature judgment in selecting, interpreting, and adapting guidelines to the particular circumstances of complex and sensitive cases. He/she evaluates current local practice and makes recommendations for change and departs from standard procedures if necessary to complete assignments.

Factor 4 - Complexity FL 4-4 225 Points

The work involves dealing with complicated pest or plant disease problems, the presence of unusual circumstances, and/or the recurrence of local inspection, control or eradication programs. It requires the ability, based on expertise, to deal with incomplete and conflicting data, and adapt a wide variety of methods and approaches.

The officer must identify the boundaries of the problem, the kinds of data that are needed, and the criteria and techniques to be used, and must coordinate the human and other resources necessary to accomplish the assignment.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect FL 5-3 150 Points

The purpose of the work is to provide expertise in the solution of local port or domestic area problems and to advance the goals of management by, for example, developing training programs and providing technical assistance to Federal and State cooperators, supervisors and managers to support the accomplishment of their goals.

The work contributes to the health and marketability of agricultural resources and to the public's understanding of the need for agricultural and other quarantines. It provides for the effective

application of quarantines and protects the public against economic agricultural losses due to destructive insects, other pests, and diseases.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts FL 6-3 60 Points

Personal contacts are with business and personal travelers, including persons of various nationalities, socioeconomic groups, and occupational levels, officers of Federal, State or local enforcement and regulatory agencies, importers and exporters, nursery personnel, contractors, and employees of airline, air cargo, and other shipping companies. Contacts usually are in structured to moderately unstructured settings and take place in such diverse places as ship's engine room, in warehouses, biocontrol insectaries, at international borders, in farmer's fields, or on the baggage floor or cargo dock of an airport.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts FL 7-2 50 Points

The contacts are established to develop cooperative relations, to plan and coordinate professional activities, and to enforce and explain regulations. Usually those contacted are cooperative, but in terms of regulation and inspection, the officer may have to deal with resistance or obstruction. He/she must use persuasion as well as the sanctions at the office's disposal to achieve compliance.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands FL 8-3 50 Points

The work requires physical exertion such as long periods of standing at passenger inspection counters or sitting for long periods to perform microscopic examinations; recurring crouching, stooping, and reaching while inspecting cargo, automobiles, vessels or other conveyances; occasional climbing and descending ladders on vessels; long periods of walking; carrying equipment weighing up to 50 pounds; occasional handling of 55 gallon drums, fumigation tarps, farm implements and equipment, gas cylinders, bags of chemical or other materials; long periods of driving in rural or metropolitan areas; occasional riding in all-terrain vehicles on rough terrain, and flying in small observation aircraft. Work schedules may require more than 40 hours per week.

Factor 9 - Work Environment BMK 9-2 20 Points

The work environment includes farms, ranches and remote areas, railroad yards, aircraft cargo areas, and marine docks. Periods of outdoor work may be required in snow, rain, or extreme heat. Occasional periods of outdoor work may be required in remote areas with no modern comfort facilities. The work involves the use of toxic chemicals, pesticides, and fumigants. Protective clothing may be required such as hard hats, gloves, goggles, masks, or self-contained breathing apparatus.

Total Points 2530